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# CBC Newsletter

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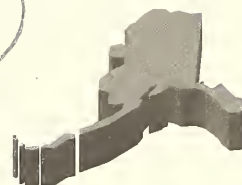
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Number 2

## The Lesser Explored Alaska

Lena Gallitano



For a number of years I'd been thinking about a trip to Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) in hopes of seeing a Gray-headed Chickadee, but just as much or more, to see the Refuge itself. When my friend Lynn Barber called to see if I wanted to make the trip in 2008, there was not a moment's hesitation on my part. We booked our trip with Wilderness Birding Adventures (WBA) quite early but then a second WBA trip caught my eye. It was the Chevak Spectacled Eider Camp – another bird I had longed to see in its native habitat for quite some time.

The description of the Chevak trip on the WBA website offered intriguing details:

This trip is a truly amazing and out of the ordinary birding experience where we will come as close as we ever will of guaranteeing the sighting of Spectacled Eider. Ulric Ulroan, a Yup'ik Eskimo from the village of Chevak in western Alaska on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (Y-K Delta), has opened his hunting and fishing camp for birders to visit. The Y-K Delta is one of the largest in the world, roughly the size of the state of Oregon, and the breeding area for millions of waterfowl and shorebirds. It's among the most productive bird breeding areas in Alaska.

We conducted an exploratory trip to this vast area ... and were delighted with what we found. Spectacled Eiders surrounded us as they prepared to pick nesting sites. The most common gull was Sabine's, the most abundant goose was Emperor and the most common shorebirds were Black Turnstone and Bar-tailed Godwit. The birding was amazing among an astounding number of birds.

I was even more intrigued with Chevak when WBA co-owner Bob Dittrock told me that after living in Alaska for 30 years, he had never visited an area in Alaska where there are as many birds.

My trip began on June 10, 2008, and with 24-hour daylight, we could see and hear birds all the time. Have you ever gone to sleep listening to a Dunlin's display call? Or seen a Semipalmated Sandpiper repeatedly sneak into her nest 20-25 feet away from your tent door? Or found pairs of Spectacled Eider looking for nest sites? Or pairs of Emperor Geese in flight or popping their heads up to see where the human voices are coming from? If not, you should add Chevak to your list of future birding destinations! But let me share more about the experience.

Chevak is west of Anchorage and 135 miles northwest of Bethel and is accessible only by air. As a small native village of about 800, it requires advance preparation in order to visit. WBA's first scheduled birding trip to Chevak was in 2008. It was exciting to be on the first trip and experience the village, the hospitality of the local residents, and the birds of the area. It was especially fun to meet Ulrich's mother whose name was also Lena!

From the village, we headed to Ulric's fish camp in an out-board motor boat – a cold, breezy ride but interesting as we followed the twists and turns of the Niglikfak River. Along the way, we could see flocks and pairs of waterfowl streaming across the sky, and with the noise of the boat and high tide, heads of others popped up like periscopes along the shoreline. We reached camp in about 45 minutes and quickly settled in, getting the sleeping tents up since Ulric

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# The Lesser Explored Alaska

Lena Gallitano



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had already set up the walled tent where meals were cooked and shared. With the flat topography and short, immature growth of the summer plants, we could see for miles, and in every direction there were birds singing, calling, foraging, incubating and flying – a virtual 24-hour show. My best comparison is to Lake Mattamuskeet and Pea Island in the winter, although with the vast area of the Y-K Delta, the birds were not as condensed as they are here in the winter but they were ever-present.

With 24-hour daylight, time is not a concern, and as our very capable WBA guide Aaron Lang explained, we would just go with the flow and enjoy the day as it comes. Just as he predicted, dinners grew later and sleeping to 7:30 or 8:00 AM on a birding trip is unheard of except with arctic summer days. Our days consisted of boat trips or hikes from camp to the many tundra ponds where we could count on seeing Red-necked Phalarope, Black Turnstone, Dunlin and Western Sandpiper that were quite spectacular in breeding plumage. Overhead both Parasitic and Long-tailed Jaeger were common. Speckle-bellies (Greater White-fronted Goose), Emperor Goose and Cackling Goose were constant companions either in the air, foraging, or incubating eggs with camouflage so complete that more than once they flew when we accidentally came way too close for comfort.

One of our boat trips was to Old Chevak and we had some time to watch the birds on their territories while we ate lunch. A Red-necked Phalarope scurried from water's edge through the dead grass to settle down and disappear in its nest. We wondered if it was the female still laying eggs or the male returning to his incubation responsibilities. On another trip to a Sabine's Gull colony by a small delta pond we had a demonstration of their skillful flight maneuvers, and this spectacular bird now has my vote as the most beautiful gull on my life list.

Chevak was a very special experience, not only for the birds, but also for the opportunity to visit this friendly village. Ulric shared many fascinating and alluring stories of native folklore as well as samples of native foods. The hospitality offered will always be a nice memory of this unique birding experience. But let me go on with the rest of my adventure as it continues in ANWR ...

Over the years, my fascination with seeing the Gray-headed Chickadee had become intertwined with my interest in ANWR, so I was very excited but also a little nervous at the prospects of an eight-day camping and rafting expedition in what might be a cold and daunting climate – even though it

was the second week of June!

This was going to be the longest camping trip I'd ever taken and would require not only some careful planning for proper clothes but also physical stamina to transport my own gear – and unfortunately I'm not a light packer (but I will be the next time)! WBA again showed their skill and proficiency with wilderness expeditions by providing detailed gear lists and even began the trip with a one-on-one check to be sure everyone had the essentials for all circumstances. Leaving from Fairbanks, we took a scheduled flight to Arctic Village where we waited on the runway for our pilot and tundra plane to shuttle us, three at a time with our gear, to the put-in on the Marsh Fork of the Canning River. The high-winged Cessna was the perfect airplane from which to see the mountains of the Brooks Range as we passed between the peaks on a beautiful, sunny and warm day. Getting everyone on site, pitching camp, having dinner (Bob and Scott proved to be excellent chefs) and learning the routine for the week took most of the day, but we were able to fit in several hours for a leisurely walk to explore the site and enjoy the abundant summer wildflowers.

Day two was sunny, warm and beautiful but also the most physically demanding of the trip as we portaged all of our camping equipment, personal gear and two rafts about a quarter of a mile across *aufeis* and the braided river to reach the open water channel suitable for launch. *Aufeis* (German for "ice on top") accumulates throughout the winter as the water in the river freezes in layers and can reach depths of several meters. The ice was beautiful and crunchy, so it helped with the rafts since we were able to slide them most of the way across the river bed.

After numerous trips back and forth, Scott discovered the nest of a Mew Gull. Made of sticks and lying out in the open on the river rock in a dry part of the river bed, it was very well camouflaged, but once we discovered it, Mama Mew became a ferocious protector of her nest, so even getting close enough to take a picture had us ducking to avoid her dive-bombing passes.

With the season early, the rafts fully loaded and the river low, we often had to pull the raft over shoals of sand and river stone because of low water, so the first few days we were frequently in and out of the rafts and looking for deeper water. Bob and Scott were both excellent in their guidance and instructions – the paddlers did have a bit of trouble with "paddle right" and "paddle left" a few times but we eventually even got that figured out. There were

(Continued on page 3)



# The Lesser Explored Alaska

*Lena Gallitano*

some Class 3-4 rapids about mid-way through the trip but by that time we were river pros!

Billed as the Gray-headed Chickadee trip, Bob took no chances, and we checked every known site for nest cavities and birds. In one likely spot we all scattered to look and listen when Scott heard a call – in minutes we were all gathered around a nest hole in a tree watching a pair of Gray-headed Chickadee's going in and out feeding young. We watched these beautiful birds for nearly an hour as they brought insect after insect to their young and removed fecal sacs with each trip. Later in the trip we found a second family group with two fledged young hidden in the rocks. Needless to say, there were a lot of high fives to celebrate our success.

Every day we saw birds along the river and had a trip list of 41 species. The most memorable were life birds for me: Gray-headed Chickadee, Wandering Tattler, Smith's Longspur and Arctic Warbler. Finding an American Dipper nest on a rock face across the river from a lunch spot will also be a lasting memory.

Another fascinating aspect of this trip was the geology of the Brooks Range. From rounded river stones with coral fossils, to the mountain that looked like a cut-away to demonstrate the plate tectonic formation of mountains, ANWR is nature's classroom. As we made our way downstream, the sharp peaks and rocks of the younger mountains gave way to rounded hills as we headed toward, but stopped short of, the coastal plain.

About half way through the trip, I made this note: white water rapids, 42° air temperature, raining, splashing – never would have thought I'd be doing this for birding!

In retrospect, it was a fantastic trip of a lifetime and I would highly recommend it to anyone looking for a unique birding experience – Alaska remains high on my list of places to visit and I'm hoping to return some day for another ANWR experience along the coastal plain. And then there is Nome, Gamball, Adak ...

If you'd like more information about these trips, go to the Wilderness Birding Adventures website at: [www.wildernessbirding.com](http://www.wildernessbirding.com). The April 2008 issue of *Birder's World* had an excellent article about Chevak and the Y-K Delta titled "Unbirded Alaska" and is on-line at <http://www.birdersworld.com/brd/default.aspx?c=a&id=1076>.

## Nominees Named for Upcoming Executive Committee Election

The following is the slate of nominees for the Executive Committee positions that will be voted on during the spring meeting in Clemson:

**President: Taylor Piephoff (Charlotte, NC)**

First one-year term. Limited to two consecutive one-year terms.

**SC Vice-President: Paul Serridge (Greenville, SC)**

First three-year term. Limited to one-three-year term.

**Secretary: Pru Williams (Hope Mills, NC)**

Third consecutive one-year term. Limited to three consecutive one-year terms.

**Treasurer: Carol Bowman (Southern Pines, NC)**

Second consecutive one-year term. Limited to three consecutive one-year terms.

**Western NC Member-at-large: Lucy Quintilliano (Charlotte, NC)**

Second consecutive two-year term. Limited to two consecutive two-year terms.

**Eastern NC Member-at-large: Skip Morgan (Manteo, NC)**

First two-year term. Limited to two consecutive two-year terms.

**SC Member-at-large: Marion Clark (Lexington, SC)**

First two-year term. Limited to two consecutive two-year terms.



The opinions expressed in the CBC Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Carolina Bird Club or its members, but are those of the authors who have contributed material. All CBC members are encouraged to submit content for publication. Submitted articles may be edited for style, content, or length prior to publication. Submissions may be made in electronic format to [newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org](mailto:newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org), or by mail to the address on the back cover.

### Did You Know?

The Long-tailed Duck will be featured on the 2009-2010 Federal "Duck Stamp"

## Plan to Join the CBC at the Clemson Spring Meeting!

Spring meetings are often some of the best attended seasonal CBC meetings, and for good reason. After a long, cold (or cool, depending on where in the Carolinas you live!) winter, the promise of migrant and returning summer resident neotropical birds can be irresistible. For many, spring means wood warblers, and what better place than the Upstate of South Carolina to observe some of the nearly three dozen warbler species that breed or pass through the southern Blue Ridge Mountains each year.

The mountains near Clemson, SC are among the highest in the state. With the maximum amount of relief possible, the opportunities to visit with migrant and resident birds are at their greatest. Field trips are planned to high altitude sites (at least for this part of the country!) where siskins, Red Crossbill, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed Junco, Common Raven, and others may be seen. Trips to middle elevations may find the elusive Swainson's Warbler defending breeding territories, Black-throated Blue Warblers singing their buzzy songs, and Northern Parulas inspecting foliage high in the tree tops. At lower elevations Prairie Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Yellow-throated Warblers and others will be in the process of setting up shop for the summer. Far-northern breeders like Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and Cape May Warbler may begin to pass through by the beginning of May, and who knows, maybe an early Mourning or Connecticut Warbler will make an appearance. (Hey, we can always hope!)

In addition to warblers, we'll search for many other types of birds including resident species, lingering waterfowl, migrant shorebirds, arriving flycatchers and vireos, and more.

Have I convinced you that the Clemson meeting will be great fun? If so, here is some information that you will find useful...

Our host hotel will be the Ramada Inn of Clemson at 1310 Tiger Blvd, Clemson, SC 29631. The phone number for reservations is (864) 654-7501 and the website is <http://ramadaclemson.com>. The room rate for a standard room, double occupancy is \$68.00 + tax. Be sure to mention the Carolina Bird Club when

making your reservations to obtain this rate. AAA and AARP members may wish to check for special rates that may be less expensive than the \$68 rate noted here. The Ramada Inn has a complimentary continental breakfast available starting at six o'clock.

On Saturday evening we will be holding the traditional dinner buffet. The menu includes fried chicken, lasagna, garden salad, fresh fruit salad, broccoli casserole, oven roasted potatoes, whole kernel corn, double fudge cake, lemon meringue pie, water and tea. The price is \$20.35 including tax and tip, and can be paid with your registration.

Friday evening features coffee and tea and fellowship starting at 7:00 PM followed by our guest speaker. The Saturday buffet will start at 7:00 after which we will enjoy a speaker and countdown the list of species seen during the weekend's field trips.

On Friday night we welcome Tim Lee, who grew up in nearby Anderson, SC, and graduated from Clemson University. For about twelve years he has been employed by the SC State Park Service on the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area in northern Greenville County as a nature interpreter. Ranger Lee lives at Caesar's Head State Park and will talk about the ecology of the southern Blue Ridge escarpment. He is also scheduled to lead the Caesar's Head State Park field trip Friday morning, meeting participants at the park.

Early arriving participants may want to register for the Thursday Bonus Field Trip to Stecoah Gap, North Carolina led by CBC member and Ventures Birding tours leader Simon Thompson. This may be your best chance of the weekend to see the splendid Golden-winged Warbler! Act early, as registration is limited to the first twelve participants. Please note there is a separate, \$20 fee for participating in the bonus trip. Registration and attendance at the Clemson meeting is not required to attend the bonus trip.

Meeting registration, field trip selection and Bonus Trip registration can be made by using the form located on page 9. See you there!



# Clemson Spring Meeting Field Trip Schedule



## **Thursday, April 30**

Bonus Trip to Stecoah Gap (NC) – 8:00 AM  
(Note: this trip meets at Stecoah Gap)

## **Friday, May 1**

### *Full Day Trips*

Trip 1 – Lake Conestee Nature Park – 7:00 AM  
Trip 2 – Hogback Mtn/Blue Wall HP - 7:15 AM

### *Morning Half-Day Trips*

Trip 3 – Caesar's Head State Park– 7:30 AM  
Trip 4 – Oconee Station State Historic Site –7:45 AM

### *Afternoon Half-Day Trips*

Trip 5 – Dobbins Farm/Beaverdam WMA/Townville  
– 1:00 PM  
Trip 6 – Stumphouse Mtn HP/Rich Mtn Rd SNF  
– 1:15 PM

## **Saturday, May 2**

### *Full Day Trips*

Trip 7 – Lake Conestee Nature Park – 7:00 AM  
Trip 8 – Caesar's Head SP/Oil Camp Crk Rd/Jones  
Gap SP - 7:15 AM

Saturday full-day trips will depart from the Ramada Inn's **front** parking lot. All others leave from the **back** parking lot.

The Stecoah Gap bonus trip meets at Stecoah Gap in North Carolina. Please note that the distance from Clemson to Stecoah Gap is about 140 miles, or 2.5 hours of driving time.

Participants on field trips are encouraged to carpool as much as possible. Not only does this reduce fuel consumption and associated carbon emissions, from a logistical perspective it is easier to keep fewer numbers of cars together, and easier to park once you arrive at the birding site(s). And who knows, you might meet your next best friend by joining a carload of birders with whom you have not become acquainted! If you have room for riders, or would like to ride in another car, please inform your field trip leader when gathering to prepare for departure. Please note that it is

Trip 9 – Devil's Fork (SC) SP/Gorges (NC) SP  
– 7:30 AM

Trip 10 – Table Rock SP/Sassafras Mtn– 7:45 AM

Trip 11 – Rich Mtn Rd/Burrell's Ford/Walhalla Trout  
Hatchery– 8:00 AM

Trip 12 – Woodburn Plantation/Fant's Grove WMA/  
Dobbins Farm/Beaverdam WMA – 7:00 AM

### *Morning Half-Day Trips*

Trip 13 – Dobbins Farm/Beaverdam WMA/Townville  
– 7:15 AM

Trip 14 – SC Botanical Garden/Blossoms, Birds,  
Butterflies – 7:30 AM

Trip 15 – Oconee Point/Lake Hartwell – 7:45 AM

Trip 16 – Lake Isaqueena/Clemson Experimental  
Forest – 8:00 AM

### *Afternoon Half-Day Trips*

Trip 17 – Dobbins Farm/Beaverdam WMA/Townville  
– 1:00 PM

Trip 18 – SC Botanical Garden/Blossoms, Birds,  
Butterflies – 1:15 PM

Trip 19 – Oconee Point/Lake Hartwell – 1:30 PM

Trip 20 – Lake Isaqueena/Clemson Experimental  
Forest – 1:45 PM

customary to share fuel expenses among carpool participants.

Many field trips are to locations with restrooms facilities and these are noted in the field trip descriptions. On trips to areas without facilities, an effort will be made to stop at a nearby fast food restaurant or service station to allow for comfort breaks.

Half day trips are timed to allow for lunch on your own, and return in time for the evening social events. Full day trip participants are encouraged to bring their own lunch, water, and snacks. In some cases a stop at a local restaurant is planned, and this is noted in the trip description if applicable.

In order to avoid disappointment, early sign-up for field trips is advised as some trips have limits to the numbers of participants. Information on trips that are full, or changes to times or trip descriptions will be made on the CBC website: [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

# Clemson Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

Marion Clark



## **Trips 1 and 7: Lake Conestee Nature Park**

This site has come onto the radar within the last few years and is a premier birding location in the Piedmont of South Carolina. Due to the great variety of habitats, expect a wide variety of sightings from shorebirds, waders and marsh birds to lingering waterfowl, woodland and woodland edge birds, raptors and more. The leader is largely responsible for putting the place on the birding map. Not difficult, but a lot of walking. Lunch at Reedy River Smokehouse & Grill.

## **Trip 2: Hogback Mountain/ Blue Wall Heritage Preserve**

Hogback Mountain is a 3240' massif not far from I-26, near Landrum-Tryon. Like Conestee Nature Park, it too is a lesser-known, but significant birding location. The twin ponds at the foot of the mountain may attract lingering waterfowl, while the mature oak-hickory, cove hardwood and hemlock-rhododendron forest hosts a great number of woodland birds. Pileated Woodpecker, Scarlet Tanager, migrant flycatchers and thrushes, up to five vireo species and 33 types of warblers use the area. Swainson's Warbler is to be expected, Common Raven and Ruffed Grouse are possible. The site is more than 1-hour's drive from the host hotel. Expect moderately-difficult walking, no restrooms, bring lunch.

## **Trip 3: Caesar's Head State Park**

Caesar's Head, at 3266', is perhaps the crown jewel of South Carolina's seven mountain parks. The panoramic view of the Carolina and Georgia mountains is stunning. Participants at the 21st annual hawkwatch held here last fall sighted over 14,000 raptors of 15 species. While spring migration is not as pronounced as fall, we'll look for raptors and for the Peregrine Falcons and Common Ravens that are present year around. Dark-eyed Junco and Ruffed Grouse (uncommon) breed in the area. The most abundant warblers are Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Hooded, Swainson's, Worm-eating, American Redstart and Ovenbird. Moderate walking on woodland trails. Restrooms and a good restaurant are nearby.

## **Trip 4: Oconee Station State Historic Site**

A stone trading post and fort date from 1792, just after the boundary between SC and the Cherokee Nation was moved from the present-day Greenville-Spartanburg County line. A short pleasant walk through Virginia Pines and then by beaver ponds (off-trail) allow for viewing a multitude of wildflowers. We will expect even more profuse wildflowers in spectacular Station Falls Cove. If you're interested in both birds and flowers, this is your trip!

## **Trips 5, 13 and 17: Dobbins Farm/Beaverdam WMA/ Townville**

In this long-time farming community are extensive pastures on the broad foothills. Look for grassland birds, some uncommon in the Carolinas, in the fields, and shorebirds and waterbirds on the farm ponds that punctuate the landscape. Beaverdam Creek is a Waterfowl Management Area on an arm of Lake Hartwell. Spring specialties include Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Horned Lark, migrating American Pipits, Dickcissel, Grasshopper Sparrow, and maybe even a lingering Lincoln's Sparrow. Around the water, look for Green Heron, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, American Bittern, Sora and Virginia Rails, migrant shorebirds and Prothonotary Warbler. Easy walking, but no restrooms.

## **Trip 6: Stumphouse Mtn Heritage Preserve/ Rich Mtn Rd Sumter National Forest**

Stumphouse Mountain is the location of an 1850s attempt to build a mile-long railroad tunnel, abandoned at 4363' because of the Civil War, and legendary 220' Isaqueena Falls. Typical low-elevation birds of the Blue Ridge are here, including Swainson's Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush along the creek. Rich Mountain Road (744) in Sumter National Forest features magnificent, old-growth hardwood forest with the attendant birdlife, including most of the local woodpeckers, vireos and warblers, with Cerulean Warbler being a long shot. Nearby Buzzards' Roost Mountain Heritage Preserve features dry oak-hickory woods and stands of Pitch Pine and Mountain Laurel, the latter of which should be at peak bloom during our visit. Several vireos and many warblers - migrants and nesters - are present here.

## **Trip 7: (See Trip 1)**

## **Trip 8: Caesar's Head State Park/ Oil Camp Creek Rd/Jones Gap State Park**

The Caesar's Head portion of this trip will be as described in Trip # 3 above. Oil Camp Creek Rd (unpaved) winds about 3 miles down the mountain to River Falls Rd (paved) which leads to Jones Gap State Park. This road/trail is perhaps the best place in the Mountain Bridge Wilderness (11,000 acres) to look for spring migrants. Wild Turkey and Ruffed Grouse are also possible. Jones Gap has good numbers of Louisiana Waterthrush, Swainson's Warbler and Wood Thrush. Expect 3-5 miles of moderate walking. Restrooms and a good restaurant are in the vicinity.

(Continued on page 7)



## Clemson Meeting Field Trip Descriptions (continued)

### **Trip 9: Devil's Fork (SC) State Park/ Gorges (NC) State Park**

The Jocassee Gorges are formed by the five rivers that rush down the escarpment into Lake Jocassee, one of South Carolina's most beautiful undeveloped mountain reservoirs. Both Carolinas have state parks in the Gorges area that provide wonderful wilderness birding. Anticipate limited numbers of waterfowl this at this time of year, rather Bald Eagle, Ruffed Grouse, Common Raven and other middle-elevation spring birds. This trip will require a lot of driving and a moderate amount of walking. Restrooms are available at Devil's Fork State Park. Plan to bring your own lunch.

### **Trip 10: Table Rock State Park/Sassafras Mt.**

Table Rock is an impressive granite landmark with a Civilian Conservation Corp-constructed state park on its south-facing slope. It is home to the state's only known nesting pair of Peregrine Falcons. At 3560' Sassafras Mountain is SC's highest point. It is one of our top venues for mountain birds, including Ruffed Grouse, Common Raven, Black-throated Blue and Chestnut-sided Warblers, and Dark-eyed Junco. Expect a lot of driving and a moderate amount of walking. Restrooms are available at Table Rock State Park. Plan to bring your own lunch.

### **Trip 11: Rich Mountain Rd/Burrell's Ford/ Walhalla Trout Hatchery**

Rich Mountain Rd is described under trip #6 above. Burrell's Ford, on the famed Chattooga (National Wild & Scenic) River, although only about 2300' in elevation, sports surprising bird life because of the deep gorge and pristine White Pine-Hemlock forest. The same can be said for the Walhalla Trout Hatchery upstream at about 2500' elevation. Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet and perhaps even Red Crossbill nest here. Black-throated Blue Warblers are especially common. Expect some driving and moderate walking. Restrooms and a good, small restaurant are nearby.

### **Trip 12: Woodburn Plantation/Fant's Grove WMA/ Dobbins Farm/Beaverdam WMA**

The barn and feedlot at Woodburn Plantation should yield farmland birds similar to those at Dobbins Farm, which is also on this trip. Both of the Wildlife Management Areas are managed primarily for waterfowl. See trip #5 for a more complete description of Dobbins Farm and Beaverdam WMA. Expect some driving and moderate walking. Restrooms and good sandwich shops can be found in the historic Pendleton Town Square.

### **Trip 13: (See Trip 5)**

### **Trips 14 and 18: SC Botanical Garden/ Blossoms, Birds, Butterflies**

Botanical gardens are rich places where animals as well as plants thrive. Join a leader who is knowledgeable about blossoms, birds and butterflies for a pleasant walk in beautiful surroundings. The State botanical garden is completely handicapped accessible, including restrooms.

### **Trips 15 and 19: Oconee Point/Lake Hartwell**

Lake Hartwell is the northwestern-most of three huge reservoirs that stretch from the Fall Line to the Foothills. Water levels are very low now due to the persistent, extreme drought affecting the area. This actually enhances the prospect of finding migrant shorebirds, and potentially lingering waterfowl. In the surrounding woods we'll search for four species of vireos and many other woodland birds. This trip features easy walking, and rest rooms can be expected to be commonly available.

### **Trips 16 and 20: Lake Isaqueena/ Clemson Experimental Forest**

Lake Isaqueena has long been managed for waterfowl and gamebirds. Situated within the Clemson Experimental Forest of oak-hickory woods and a backwater marsh of Twelve-mile Creek (arm of Lake Hartwell), this site has the potential to produce sightings of many interesting birds. Look for Wild Turkey as well as Prothonotary and Worm-eating Warblers. Expect a moderate amount of easy walking. Restrooms are available.

### **Trip 17: (see Trip 5)**

### **Bonus Trip: Stecoah Gap (separate \$20 fee)**

Join Simon Thompson for a guided visit to the famed Stecoah Gap region in western NC. Expect several warbler species (including Blackburnian, Cerulean & Golden-winged), Blue-headed, Yellow-throated & Red-eyed Vireos, Scarlet Tanagers, Indigo Buntings, and more. The Gap is also a good spot for spring butterflies, and wildflowers will be in bloom along the forest service road and on the Appalachian Trail (AT). Expect a fairly level, easy walk; with optional, steeper climbs on the AT to enjoy the wildflower show. The trip will start at 8:00 AM at Stecoah Gap and should end by mid-afternoon. Directions and other information will be sent to participants upon registration. Please bring a picnic lunch. The nearest rest rooms are in Robbinsville, about 7 miles from Stecoah Gap. There are also restaurants and a couple of motels/inns in the Robbinsville area. Limited to 12 participants

# Pelagic Birding off Cape Hatteras

Brian Patteson

Since the 1970's, the Gulf Stream off Cape Hatteras has been recognized as one of the top sites in North America for viewing pelagic seabirds. The close proximity of deep ocean waters and a major current system to the Outer Banks makes getting to the offshore birds much easier than anywhere else off the Carolinas. In fact, because the diversity of birds is so much better than anywhere else off the East Coast, pelagic trips off Hatteras are largely supported by out of state birders seeking to increase their life lists or to better know or to photograph the seabirds that occur here.



Long-tailed Jaeger

The hundreds of trips that have been conducted here over the years have taught us a lot about what to expect. In the 1970's the Black-capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata* was the primary target species of birders coming to Hatteras. Many of the species we now see annually had not been recorded at all. By the 1980's, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, previously thought to be a vagrant to the area, was discovered to be a regular visitor- even common at times. In the



European Storm-Petrel

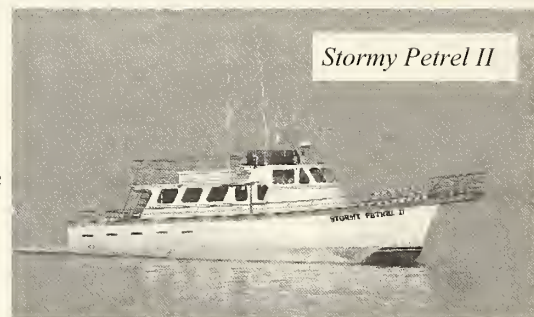
1990's, the list of rare but regular birds grew to include three more *Pterodroma* species: Fea's Petrel, Herald (Trindade) Petrel, and even the endangered Bermuda Petrel, one of the world's rarest seabirds. More recently, other species have been added to the list of North American birds based on records from our pelagic trips

off Cape Hatteras; Black-bellied Storm-Petrel has occurred three times since 2004, and we photographed a Cape Verde Shearwater in August 2004. Since 2005, European Storm-Petrel has been found annually and all U.S. records are from here!

But pelagic trips are not just about rarities or checkmarks on a list. Some of the most endearing species are the commonest ones- the little Wilson's Storm-Petrels pattering behind the boat, the bold and graceful Greater Shearwaters, the improbable phalaropes spinning around in circles miles offshore, the Bridled and Sooty Terns teaching their young to feed in the Gulf Stream in late summer, the Northern

Gannets diving at point blank range behind our boat in winter, and the dapper Razorbills massing in inshore waters just a bit too far out for shore-based observers. These are just a few of the species we see frequently on our trips at various seasons. Seeing these special birds on their own terms where you can leave the troubles of land behind for several hours should be reward enough for going to sea whether or not a lifer is seen.

We are often asked when is the best time for a pelagic trip? In most cases, that would be whenever you can find the time. Generally we see the winter birds from January to mid March, and the period



Stormy Petrel II

from mid May to late September is usually good for seeing between 7 and 12 species of pelagic seabirds daily. Some of the rarest species, like Fea's Petrel are best seen in spring, but others, like tropicbirds, are more likely in summer.

Since 2006, we have operated nearly all of our pelagic trips on our boat. Our vessel, now the *Stormy Petrel II*, is a superb vessel for pelagic birding- big, safe, and comfortable in the varying sea conditions we encounter. We limit the number of passengers on any trip to 26 or less, so there is always plenty of deck space on our boat, much of it in the bow. Being close to the birds in Hatteras, we can operate our trips with just nine or ten people in most cases, so scheduled trips are rarely canceled. We can also run affordable charters for bird clubs and other natural history or photography groups.



Fea's Petrel

For Carolina Bird Club members, we are offering a \$20/person discount on most of our trips in 2009. To see our full schedule of trips, visit our website- <http://www.seabirding.com/>, or give us a call at (252) 986-1363. Finding space on a pelagic trip has never been easier and our many years of experience enable us to run some of the best trips ever.



# CBC Spring Meeting, Field Trip Sign-Up and Bonus Trip Registration Form

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Spring 2009 Meeting

Meeting Registration (Member) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Registration (Non-member) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday Buffet Dinner (each) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20.35 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Stecoah Gap Bonus Field Trip \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*To pre-register for field trips, place the trip number(s) in the boxes to the right.

| Field Trip Sign-Up | A.M.<br>1st/2nd<br>Choice | P.M.<br>1st/2nd<br>Choice | All Day<br>1st/2nd<br>Choice |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Friday             | /                         | /                         | /                            |
| Saturday           | /                         | /                         | /                            |

Total = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Club policy requires all field trip participants to comply with the field trip leader's assessment and requests concerning the physical ability of each participant to make or complete the trip. Meeting registration at the door costs \$25.

I release and discharge (and will not make a claim against) Carolina Bird Club for injury, death, or property damage arising from my participation at this meeting and/or Club field trips. This release of liability is entered into on behalf of all members of my family, including all minors accompanying me. I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of any such minors and that I am over 18 years of age.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to: CBC, 353 Montabello, Bloomingdale, IL 60108

☐ Please update my address or other contact information as listed above

## Welcome New Members!

The Carolina Bird Club extends a very warm welcome to our newest members. We hope you enjoy the offerings of the CBC and great birding in the Carolinas and beyond!

Jennifer Alligood  
Pantego, NC

Leigh Ayers  
Indian Land, SC

Louise and Bill  
Bazemore  
Winston-Salem, NC

Barbara Rogers  
Blaney  
Columbia, SC

Bernice Ciatto  
Waynesville, NC

Ed Corey  
Raleigh, NC

Larry and Lucinda  
Cottrell  
East Flat Rock, NC

Richard Ferguson  
Morganton, NC

Miriam Glover-  
Wetherington  
Richlands, NC

Scott Jackson-  
Ricketts  
Independence, VA

Diana Johnson  
Myrtle Beach, SC

Tom and Ryan Jus-  
tice  
Raleigh, NC

Jane Kramer  
Piedmont, SC

Jeff Lemons  
Charlotte, NC

Mike and Martha  
Mayo  
Morehead City, NC

Frank Mitchell  
Pine Knoll Shores,  
NC

Glaeshia O'Rourke  
Durham, NC

Brian Pendergraft  
Raleigh, NC

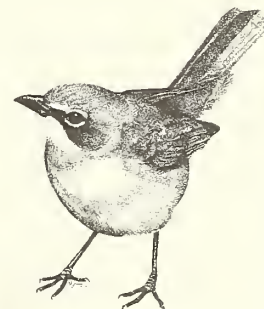
C. Glenn Pickard  
Prospect Hill, NC

Kaari Snook  
Wilmington, NC

John Voigt  
Emerald Isle, NC

## Deceased Member:

James H. Coman III



Lynne Mattocks Lucas



Carolina Bird Club, Inc.  
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STE 9 PMB 150, Raleigh, NC  
27615

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## Upcoming CBC Meetings

Hickory, NC September 25-27, 2009

Beaufort, SC January 29-31, 2010

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## CBC Board Members

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Lancaster, SC, 803-286-4998  
SCBirder@aol.com

### Vice-Presidents

Marion Clark, Lexington, SC  
David McCloy, Southern Pines, NC  
Taylor Piephoff, Charlotte, NC

### Secretary

Pru Williams, Hope Mills, NC

### Treasurer

Carol Bowman, Southern Pines, NC

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Lena Gallitano, Raleigh  
Dwayne Martin, Hickory  
Lucy Quintilliano, Charlotte  
Ed Toone, Wilmington

### SC Member-at-Large

Linda Kolb, Seneca

**Immediate Past President**, Stephen Harris, Bloomingdale, IL

**Editor of *The Chat***, Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC

**Website Editor**, Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC

**Editor of *CBC Newsletter***, Steven Shultz

4201 Sentimental Lane, Apex, NC 27539

919-779-2826, sshultz@nc.rr.com

Submission deadlines are due the 1st of January, March, May,  
July, September, and November.

**Headquarters Secretary**, Dana Harris, Bloomingdale, IL

630-453-8270, srharris@mindspring.com

**Rare Bird Alert**: 704-332-BIRD

**CBC Website**: [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The *CBC Newsletter* is published bimonthly by Carolina Bird Club, Inc. Founded in 1937 the membership is open to anyone interested in birds, natural history, and conservation. Current dues are: Individual & non-profit, \$20; Associate (in household with individual), \$5; Student, \$15; Patron, \$50 and up; Sustaining & businesses, \$25; Life, \$400; Associate Life (in household with Life Member), \$100 (both Life memberships can be paid in four annual installments). Membership dues of \$20 include \$4 for a subscription to *CBC Newsletter* and \$5 for a subscription to *The Chat*. Cost for CBC bird checklists, including postage: 10@\$2.50, 25@\$6, 50@\$11.75, 75@\$17.75, and 100@\$23.50. Submit application for membership, change of address, and payment for checklists to: CBC Headquarters Secretary, 6325 Falls of the Neuse Road, STE 9 PMB 150, Raleigh, NC 27615. Copyright © 2009. Printed on 100% recycled paper at Grass Roots Press.